

**Editorial****Protect the Beauty of Duxbury**

*The flowers anew, returning seasons bring! But beauty faded has no second spring.*

Ambrose Phillips, "The First Pastoral." 1709

Duxbury is a unique New England town. It is a treasure of history and splendorous beauty where one can still take the road less traveled. We who live here are lucky people, the product of an extraordinary legacy graced to us by men and women of vision who, once having found a place they could lovingly call home, set about to protect it from the invasion of suburban sprawl.

That sprawl, which has enveloped so many towns on the South Shore, is still at our door and won't be kept at bay by good luck or by benign neglect. We still need visionaries to harness an ever encroaching growth. That we will grow is inevitable. How we grow is up to us.

Over the past 50 years, Duxbury got "lucky" twice, the first time in 1954 when visionaries persuaded non-believers that the days of our forever remaining a quaint village were over and that we needed one-acre zoning to keep "our little secret" from being gobbled up by the Levittown developers marching across the country. It was hard to believe in 1954 that population density could ever befoul Duxbury. But it could have and the fact that it did not is testament to those who foresaw the future: urban flight traveling down a macadam ribbon called Route 3 for a little piece of

green in the suburbs. The result was chaotic growth that is underscored by these statistics:

In 1960, Duxbury, with its one-acre zoning and Marshfield, with no restrictive zoning, had populations of around 6,000 residents. Ten years later, Duxbury had 8,000 residents; Marshfield had more than 15,000. (In 1973 when Marshfield finally overhauled its zoning bylaws and enacted stricter zoning the town's population topped 21,000.)

Duxbury got "lucky" again in the early 1970s when the late Dr. Lance Bennett (the legend, many called him) led a protracted campaign to protect our water supply and increase our open space. He and we gave conservation a good name and the result produced more than 3,000 acres of land that will forever escape the wrath of the bulldozer.

The campaign Dr. Bennett launched by asking "How much is an osprey worth when there are no more osprey" has never faded over the past 30 years. Yet it is clear from this vantage that some of the zeal of the Bennett years is gone and that unless the campaign is renewed with a new spirit, Duxbury will lose what is left of its semi-rural character.

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It does not have to be that way.

A new group of Duxbury visionaries endowed with the same energy that infected their brethren more than a quarter century ago is about to unveil an ambitious conservation program that will protect three of every 10 acres left to develop in Duxbury. They make up the Duxbury Citizens for Community Preservation and this spring they will ask Duxbury voters to adopt the state's new Community Preservation Act. It will be the first step of a 20-year plan to acquire 1500 acres at a cost of \$15 million dollars, including \$6 million to be raised through the private sector.

This is a complicated and comprehensive plan which will have the full endorsement of the Duxbury Clipper. We support the plan to preserve Duxbury and over the next 10 weeks will devote considerable space toward explaining it. And though we list ourselves as devoted proponents, we recognize that opposition will surface and understand that it too deserves a forum among these pages.

Since 1950 we have taken two giant steps to safeguard the unrivaled beauty that is Duxbury. Now, as potential development rounds the bend toward full and final growth, we have a chance through the Community Preservation Act to dictate how that growth will evolve. It is a chance that may never come again, knowing as we do "That beauty faded has no second spring."